

# General John J. Pershing: Critical Observations and Experiences in Manchuria and Mexico

A Monograph

by

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2017

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REPORT DOCUMENTATION PAGE				Form Approved OMB No. 0704-0188	
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1. REPORT DATE (DD-MM-YYYY) 04-18-2017		2. REPORT TYPE Master's Thesis		3. DATES COVERED (From - To) JUN 2016 – MAY 2017	
4. TITLE AND SUBTITLE General John J. Pershing: Critical Observations and Experiences in Manchuria and Mexico				5a. CONTRACT NUMBER	
				5b. GRANT NUMBER	
				5c. PROGRAM ELEMENT NUMBER	
6. AUTHOR(S) MAJ Kira C. D. Weyrauch				5d. PROJECT NUMBER	
				5e. TASK NUMBER	
				5f. WORK UNIT NUMBER	
7. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES) U.S. Army Command and General Staff College ATTN: ATZL-SWD-GD Fort Leavenworth, KS 66027-2301				8. PERFORMING ORG REPORT NUMBER	
9. SPONSORING / MONITORING AGENCY NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES) Advanced Military Studies Program, School of Advanced Military Studies				10. SPONSOR/MONITOR'S ACRONYM(S)	
				11. SPONSOR/MONITOR'S REPORT NUMBER(S)	
12. DISTRIBUTION / AVAILABILITY STATEMENT Approved for Public Release; Distribution is Unlimited					
13. SUPPLEMENTARY NOTES					
14. ABSTRACT This monograph concentrates on General Pershing's experiences in the Pacific during the Russo-Japanese War in Manchuria, and as the commander of the punitive expedition into Mexico. His observations and experiences before World War I, informed General Pershing's skill, knowledge, and judgment as a commander and improved his ability to understand, visualize and describe an approach for conducting operations. Ultimately General Pershing's observations and experience before the war led to his success as Commander of the AEF, as he was able overcome the ambiguity and intricacies of a complex and uncertain operational environment. General Pershing's observations during the Russo-Japanese War and his command of the punitive expedition into Mexico solidified his belief in the fundamental necessity of discipline and offensive training, effective administration of logistics, and the enablement of strong and capable subordinate leaders. General Pershing's critical findings can be further broken down into numerous elements of operational art and the principles of joint operations. So while General Pershing is not largely recognized as an operational artist in contemporary writing, his observations and experiences with regards to the elements of operational art and the principles of joint operations before World War I certainly shaped his performance in Europe, making him a practitioner of operational art.					
15. SUBJECT TERMS General John J. Pershing, Russo-Japanese War, Punitive Expedition, World War I, AEF, Operational Art, Principles of Joint Operations					
16. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF:			17. LIMITATION OF ABSTRACT  (U)	18. NUMBER OF PAGES  45	19a. NAME OF RESPONSIBLE PERSON MAJ Kira C. D. Weyrauch
a. REPORT (U)	b. ABSTRACT (U)	c. THIS PAGE (U)			19b. PHONE NUMBER (include area code)

## Monograph Approval Page

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## Abstract

General John J. Pershing: Critical Observations and Experiences in Manchuria and Mexico, by MAJ Kira C. D. Weyrauch, US Army, 45 pages.

There is a gap in literary work on the significance of the observations and experiences of General John J. Pershing prior to his command of the American Expeditionary Force (AEF). Specifically this monograph concentrates on General Pershing's experiences in the Pacific during the Russo-Japanese War in Manchuria, and as the commander of the punitive expedition into Mexico. His observations and experiences before World War I, informed General Pershing's skill, knowledge, and judgment as a commander and improved his ability to understand, visualize and describe an approach for conducting operations. Ultimately General Pershing's observations and experience before the war led to his success as Commander of the AEF, as he was able overcome the ambiguity and intricacies of a complex and uncertain operational environment.

General Pershing's observations during the Russo-Japanese War and his command of the punitive expedition into Mexico solidified his belief in the fundamental necessity of discipline and offensive training, effective administration of logistics, and the enablement of strong and capable subordinate leaders. General Pershing's critical findings can be further broken down into numerous elements of operational art and the principle of joint operations. For example there are recurring elements of basing, operational reach, tempo and culmination and the principles of mass, maneuver, offensive, objective and unity of command. So while General Pershing is not largely recognized as an operational artist in contemporary writing, his observations and experiences with regards to the elements of operational art and the principles of joint operations before World War I certainly shaped his performance in Europe, making him a practitioner of operational art.

This monograph analyzes three historical periods. The first period addresses then Captain Pershing's activities as an observer and attaché to Japan in Manchuria at the conclusion of the Russo-Japanese war in 1905. The second period extends from the 14th of March 1916, to the 7th of February 1917, during General Pershing's punitive expedition into Mexico. The last period is a synthesis of General Pershing experiences in the Pacific and Mexico and explains how he applied them as commander of the AEF from 1917 to 1918.

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## Acknowledgement

I would like to thank the instructors at the School of Advanced Military Studies. Specifically my seminar leader Colonel Philipp Leyde and monograph director Dr. Thomas Brusino. Their guidance and assistance was instrumental in accomplishing this crucible task. I would also like to thank my parents, William Weyrauch and Connie Dunkle-Weyrauch, as well as my husband Joseph Anderson. They provided constant encouragement, and accompanied me on my journey through history. I would also like to thank my classmates in seminar seven for their moral support, positive attitudes, and overall army sense of humor. Finally I would like to acknowledge my sweet little critter children; Wicket, Clara, Ginger, Pershing and Beni the cat. Often the hours writing this monograph were spent with little heads resting on my feet, eyes looking up at me longingly, eager for my next break. To them I say, "Let's go play, I am done, we did it!"

## Acronyms

AEF	American Expeditionary Force
ADP	Army Doctrine Publication
ADRP	Army Doctrine Reference Publication
JP	Joint Publication
SOS	Services of Supply

## Introduction

In each succeeding war there is a tendency to proclaim as something new the principles under which it is conducted. Not only those who have never studied or experienced the realities of war, but also professional soldiers frequently fall into the error. But the principles of warfare as I learned them at West Point remain unchanged.

— General John J. Pershing, *My Experiences In The First World War*

Few men have been responsible to such a degree, that their actions changed the trajectory of the world. As true political instruments continuing political intercourse by other means, these men have changed the world through the conduct of war.<sup>1</sup> Statues adorn memorial parks throughout the United States and Europe, erected in honor of these great men. The most notable include Generals George Washington, Ulysses S. Grant, John J. Pershing, and Dwight D. Eisenhower. These military titans changed the course of the world by leading the United States Armed Forces during its most trying times: birth, civil war, and two world wars. Ultimately their military efforts achieved the politically desired end-state of the American political leadership for which they were subordinate. Collectively these generals ensured that the United States retained its sovereignty under the ideals of liberty and a free market, preserved the Union, and paved the way for the complete social and political realignment of the world.

Of these great men only General Pershing did not aspire to lead politically as a president after his significant military accomplishment during World War I. He chose instead to continue to serve in a military capacity as the United States Army Chief of Staff until his retirement.<sup>2</sup> According to General Pershing, “I am here expressly to carry out the wishes of the President and

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<sup>1</sup> Carl Von Clausewitz, Michael Howard, and Peter Paret, *On War* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1976), 87.

<sup>2</sup> Donald Smythe, *Pershing, General of the Armies* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1986), 269-274.



administration to the best of my mediocre ability...”<sup>3</sup> It is that ‘mediocre’ ability that this monograph attempts to address. It does not seek to proclaim something new with regards to operational art or principles of war. Rather it aims to demonstrate how General Pershing not only learned but also experienced the principles of warfare throughout his career before assuming command of the American Expeditionary Force (AEF) in 1917. More specifically his experiences with regards to the theory of warfare as described in current doctrine as operational art. “The principles of warfare as I learned them... were verified by my experience in our Indian Wars, and also during the campaign against the Spaniards in Cuba. I applied them in the Philippines and observed their application in Manchuria during the Russo-Japanese War.”<sup>4</sup>

There are many literary works devoted to General Pershing. Many authors focus on his contributions as a military leader with the primary emphasis on his accomplishments in World War I. This set of work is severely limited, consisting of biographical information and accounts General Pershing's achievements throughout his life in various expeditions and campaigns. Even fewer authors concentrate on the history of operational art. While the body of work on operational art is relatively small, it continues to grow, as the theory is understood further within doctrine and its application in history. While this second set of work is limited in quantity, it also lacks operational art as it relates to General Pershing. Finally, there are a couple of authors that acknowledge General Pershing as an operational artist. However, their work is limited to General Pershing's experiences in Europe during World War I. What this means is that there is a noticeable gap in literary work on General Pershing and his experiences before World War I and how those experiences shaped him into the Commander of the AEF.

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<sup>3</sup> Smythe, Pershing, *General of the Armies*, 269.

<sup>4</sup> John J. Pershing, *My Experiences in the First World War* (New York: Da Capo Press, 1995), 11.

Several biographical works discuss in detail General Pershing's life. Most notable are two works written by Donald Smythe. The first *Guerrilla Warrior: The Early Life of John J. Pershing* examines General Pershing's early life and career. Specifically, Smythe discusses General Pershing's birth and primary schooling in Missouri, his attendance at West Point and later appointment as an instructor. *Guerrilla Warrior* presents General Pershing's experience as a cavalrymen in the American West, counter-insurgency operations in the Philippines and his governorship of the Moro Province. It concludes with his pursuit into Mexico after Pancho Villa. Smythe's second biography *Pershing: General of the Armies*, takes up where *Guerrilla Warrior* left off, with General Pershing's appointment as the head of the AEF. It focuses primarily on General Pershing's task of building and integrating the large newly formed modern American army into the French battlefields of World War I. *Pershing* narrates an account of General Pershing and American military contributions in Europe, specifically at Cantigny, Chateau-Thierry, Belleau Wood, St. Mihiel, and finally during the Meuse-Argonne campaign.

Frank E. Vandiver provides a detailed two-volume biography of General Pershing, titled *Black Jack: The Life and Times of John J. Pershing*. Vandiver addresses many of the same biographical events as Smythe but provides more detail about General Pershing's position at the head of the Office of Customs and Insular Affairs which oversaw occupation forces in the territories gained in the Spanish-American War, including Cuba, Puerto Rico, the Philippines, and Guam. Vandiver also offers more detail with regards to General Pershing's promotion to brigadier general and his relationship with his father-in-law Senator Francis Warren from Wyoming. Finally and most importantly *Black Jack* provides a better account of General Pershing's experience in Japan and Manchuria while serving as an American advisor during the Russo-Japanese War.

While both Smythe and Vandiver discuss General Pershing in great depth biographically collectively their work lacks synthesis with regards to principles of warfare as General Pershing may have known them. However, their work does provide a starting block and context for General

Pershing's experiences, and allow for the application of the current theory of warfare, known in US doctrine as operational art.

There are a few authors and collections of works that concentrate on the history of operational art. Of note is the anthology of essays titled, *Historical Perspectives of the Operational Art*. Col. Michael D. Krause, a former deputy commander of the United States Army Center of Military History, made the initial selections for the anthology. In the *Historical Perspective*, historians and scholars trace the origin and development of the operational level of warfare, which is the critical link between strategy and tactics. The collection of work seeks to show the doctrinal development and application of operational art in modern history mostly from a European perspective. The essays provide an orientation to significant battles and campaigns from the past, and it facilitates an understanding of operational art and its application in contemporary doctrine. While the study includes several essays on operational art with regards to American campaigns, they are limited to the Civil War, World War II planning in Normandy, North Korea in 1950, and operational art in Operation Desert Shield and Desert Storm. The collection lacks analysis of Japanese operational art, or operational art demonstrated during World War I.

Antulio J. Echevarria's article *American Operational Art, 1917 to 2008*, published in *The Evolutions of Operational Art* provides another account of American operational art. He offers a specific section dedicated to World War I where he describes the operational readiness and effectiveness of the AEF with regards to the engagement at St. Mihiel. Echevarria outlines the particular difficulties associated with the coordination of fires, the movement of large forces, logistics and the integration and use of the Navy's operational tasks within the war. Echevarria's article lacks the development of American operational art before World War I and does not include the development of General Pershing as an operational artist or his use of operational art during the war.

Michael R. Matheny's *Carrying the War to the Enemy: American Operational Art to 1945* provides another history of operational art as it developed in practice and institutionally within the United States Army from the early the Civil War until the end of World War II in 1945. *Carrying the War to the Enemy* focuses on the Army and Navy educational systems and their impact on American experiences in World War I. Matheny discusses the War Colleges, and the establishment the School of Application for Cavalry and Infantry at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, later named the School of the Line and the Army Staff College. *Carrying the War* asserts that the military educational systems established a the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century and the experiences of World War I developed a set of young staff officers that would later be responsible for leading successful joint and combined operations in World War II. *Carrying the War* highlights four major examples of successful combined operations: Operation Torch, the 1942 invasion of North Africa, Operation Overlord, the 1944 invasion of Normandy, General Douglas MacArthur's return to the Philippines in 1944, and finally Operation Iceberg, the 1945 invasion of Okinawa. Matheny acknowledges that operational art was demonstrated and played a vital role in the American successes at St. Mihiel and at the Meuse-Argonne as part of Marshal Ferdinand Foch's theater strategy. While not explicitly stated, Matheny highlights General Pershing's leadership and oversight of Lt. Col. George C. Marshall in developing the American Expeditionary Force's (AEF) first solo engagement at the St. Mihiel salient and the remarkable concurrent planning of follow-on operations to be executed in the Meuse-Argonne campaign.

There is a gap in literary work on the significance of the observations and experiences of General Pershing prior to his command of the AEF. Specifically this monograph concentrates on General Pershing's experiences in the Pacific during the Russo-Japanese War in Manchuria, and as the commander of the Punitive Expedition into Mexico. His observations and experiences before World War I informed General Pershing's skill, knowledge, and judgment as a commander and improved his ability to understand, visualize, and describe an approach for conducting operations.

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The primary sources for this study are General Pershing's *My Life before the World War, 1860-1917: A Memoir* published in 2013 as well as his *My Experiences In The First World War* published in 1931. Additional secondary biographical sources provide insight into General Pershing's development, experience and application of operational art specifically during his experiences in the Pacific and Mexico.

# The Russo-Japanese War: Observations in Manchuria 1905

## Strategic Context

Motivated by Russia's ever-increasing territorial gains in Manchuria and Korea, the Japanese conducted a surprise attack on Port Arthur on 8 February 1904. Two days later Japan declared war. Russian presence had slowly manifested itself since the end of the Sino-Japanese War in 1895, mainly through the acquisition of Port Arthur and the construction of both the Chinese Eastern and South Manchurian Railroads.<sup>5</sup> By 1904, Russia and Japan could not come to an amicable agreement over the statuses of Manchuria and Korea as exclusive spheres of influence. Japan believed that Russia's unfettered expansion threatened their nation's very existence and as such war was necessary.<sup>6</sup>

At the onset of the war, the international community primarily through prejudice, believed Japan's military to be the inferior force between the two countries. Captain Pershing noted "in spite of a general situation that appeared favorable to the Japanese, the observers with their armies freely predicted defeat for them in the next great battle, should there be another."<sup>7</sup> The availability of accurate reporting provided by the Russian Legation in Tokyo could not convince the international community, specifically the Russian civil and military leadership that their understanding of the situation and Japanese capabilities was inaccurate.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> S.C.M Paine, *The Sino-Japanese War of 1894-1895: Perceptions, Power, and Primacy* (New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 320-321. Russia's encroachment reached its pinnacle after deploying over 100,000 soldiers to Manchuria during the Boxer Rebellion in 1900 to protect their substantial rail interests. The Russians decided to maintain their troops in garrisons throughout Manchuria, even after the Chinese government had restored order, which further threatened Japanese security and economic interests within the region.

<sup>6</sup> Geoffrey Jukes, *The Russo-Japanese War 1904-1905* (Oxford: Osprey, 2002), 20.

<sup>7</sup> John J. Pershing, *My Life Before the World War, 1860-1917* (Lexington, KY: University Press of Kentucky, 2013), 221.

<sup>8</sup> Jukes, *The Russo-Japanese War*, 20. The Russians inherently considered the Japanese to be "little people who lived in paper houses... and wasted hours on flower arrangements and tea ceremonies."

In actuality Japan was prepared for war with Russia. They had a well-trained, professional army and a modern navy.<sup>9</sup> Japan also had the capability to quickly mobilize their entire standing army and reinforce the Korean Peninsula with trained reserves.<sup>10</sup> Their General Staff led by Field Marshal Oyama, Commander-in-Chief of the Japanese armies in Manchuria<sup>11</sup> had personal experience of the terrain and had completed numerous studies on Russian strengths and weaknesses to include the capabilities of the Trans-Siberian Railroad and its ability to support a war in the Far East.<sup>12</sup>

In the end despite Russia's overwhelming total troop strength, they did not have nearly enough combat power available east of Lake Baikal.<sup>13</sup> As the Russo-Japanese War progressed, it became apparent to observers and the international community at large that ultimately the Japanese Army and Navy were superior to the Russians in doctrine, training, and experienced leadership.<sup>14</sup> Those tenets, along with the emerging tactical and technical aspects of modern war, occupied the

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<sup>9</sup> Yoji Koda, "The Russo-Japanese War: Primary Causes of Japanese Success," *Naval War College Review*, 58, No. 2 (2005) 20, Jukes, 21 and Dupuy and Dupuy, 1009. Japan had also increased and modernized its existing Navy immediately following the Sino-Japanese War and subsequent Triple Intervention in 1895. They started the Russo-Japanese war with six new battleships, one older battleship, and ten new armored cruisers, nearly all of which were built in Great Britain.

<sup>10</sup> R. Ernest Dupuy and Trevor N. Dupuy, *The Harper Encyclopedia of Military History: From 3500 BC to the Present*, 4th ed. (New York, NY: HarperCollins, 1993), 1009. The Japanese army consisted of 283,000 soldiers, and had 870 guns available at the start of the war. They also had the naval capability to quickly reinforce their regular troops with 400,000 trained reserves. Japan owed its well-trained and modern army to the lessons that they had observed during the Franco-Prussian War of 1871 when the Prussians had delivered a crushing defeat to the French. After which the Japanese immediately adopted the Prussian model for organizing their army to include the Prussian general staff system.

<sup>11</sup> J.N. Westwood, *Russia against Japan, 1904-5: A New Look at the Russo-Japanese War* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1986), 51 and William A. Hammac, "The Russo-Japanese War of 1904-1905 and the Evolution of Operational Art," (Monograph, School of Advanced Military Studies, 2013), 16. During the Franco-Prussian war Field Marshal Oyama had served as an observer. In the years following the war he was instrumental in establishing the Japanese national army, and during the Sino-Japanese War, then serving as the minister of war, was appointed as the Commander of the Japanese Second Army.

<sup>12</sup> Paine, *The Sino-Japanese War of 1894-189*, 151. The Russians had an estimated 4.5 million men available to fight, they only had 83,000 field troops with 196 guns plus an additional 50,000 garrison troops and railway guards immediately available east of Lake Baikal.

<sup>13</sup> Dupuy and Dupuy, *The Harper Encyclopedia of Military History*, 1009.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid.

recollections of European and American observers in Manchuria, and Captain John J. Pershing was no exception.

In late 1904, Captain Pershing was serving as a student officer at the Army War College when he received notice of his future assignment in Tokyo as a Military Attaché and observer. He was to be attached to the Japanese First Army in Manchuria, commanded by General Kuroki Tamemoto.<sup>15</sup> On his selection, Captain Pershing admits to his longtime friend and West Point classmate Avery Andrews that it “gives me a chance to go to the front with the Japanese Army, an ambition which I have entertained ever since the beginning of the war.”<sup>16</sup> Before March 1905, Japan had conducted a hugely successful naval campaign, which permanently destroyed the Russia's Pacific Squadron and the Vladivostok Cruiser Squadron. After successfully securing the sea lines of communication from Japan to Korea and Manchuria the Japanese Army conducted troop landings, set up a base of operations, and conducted the siege of Port Arthur. The Japanese had won every tactical engagement against the Russians as they retreated north through southern Manchuria and finally culminated in the Japanese victory at Mukden.

## Japanese Operational Art in Manchuria

Captain Pershing realized as a military professional that there were many lessons to be learned in Manchuria with regards to current and future conduct of warfare. He wanted to observe the principles of warfare as he had learned them at West Point between the years 1882 and 1886, an education uniquely impacted by the memories and experiences of American Civil War commanding officers, the very men that fought and led in warfare during the transformation and

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<sup>15</sup> Avery DeLano Andrews, *My Friend and Classmate John J. Pershing. With Notes from My War Diary* (Harrisburg, PA: Military Service Pub. Co, 1939), 65.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, 66.



innovations of the Industrial Revolution.<sup>17</sup> By walking the terrain in Manchuria, and observing General Kuroki's First Army, Captain Pershing advanced his ability to understand, visualize and finally describe an approach for conducting modern warfare, specifically large-scale operations. In Manchuria, Captain Pershing observed several elements of operational art and principles of joint operations as performed by the Japanese, and would later draw upon those observations as Generals of the Armies during World War I.

Captain Pershing arrived in Tokyo on 5 March 1905 and four days later he headed to Manchuria. His route of travel took him from Shimonoseki in Southern Japan where he briefly visited the Russian prisoner of war camp in Moji.<sup>18</sup> Then he set sail for Dairen the Japanese base of operations in Manchuria. Before the war, the Russians had developed Dairen as a commercial port city just north of Port Arthur. Dairen was significant logistically for the Russians because it connected to the Trans-Siberian Railway by way of the South Manchurian Railway a branch of the Chinese Eastern Railway at the Russian city of Harbin. After its capture, the Japanese were able to use Dairen's port as a point of debarkation for supplies to include food, additional artillery pieces, munitions and troop transports arriving from Japan. From Dairen the South Manchurian Rail moved those same critical supplies and troops north to Mukden ultimately providing for all the logistical aspects of Marshal Oyama's Japanese Armies in Manchuria.<sup>19</sup> Upon landing, Captain Pershing noted, there was much hustling and bustling and consequently much noise, but no confusion, "the capacity of the Japanese for organization, had brought order out of what would otherwise have been Chinese chaos."<sup>20</sup> When Captain Pershing looked out at Dairen, he saw "long cart trains tended by

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<sup>17</sup> Frederick Palmer, *John J. Pershing, General of the Armies, a Biography* (Harrisburg, PA: Military Service Publishing, 1948), 19.

<sup>18</sup> Frank Everson Vandiver, *Black Jack: The Life and Times of John J. Pershing* (College Station: Texas A & M University Press, 1977), 358.

<sup>19</sup> Pershing, *My Life Before the War*, 223.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid., and Donald Smythe, *Guerrilla Warrior; The Early Life of John J. Pershing* (New York, NY: Scribner, 1973), 121.

mercenary Chinese snaked the streets toward the northwest, and as they moved they trailed a flotsam of yelling, running, gesticulating coolies pursuing wants unknown.”<sup>21</sup> At first Captain Pershing saw chaos but with closer examination recognized the ability of the Japanese to bring order to the large-scale logistical and mobilization operations going on around him. He noted that Japanese supply officers guided the trail drivers in particular order to where they needed to be, that colored ropes or tags marked supplies ensuring time was not lost in reading labels, and finally, he noted that the trains received the supplies moved in trafficked pattern.<sup>22</sup> Captain Pershing’s first professional observation of Manchuria summarized was that “the Japanese Army was organized.” As Captain Pershing made his way north to the Manchurian city Mukden, he saw the enormous logistical efforts and considerations required to sustain four Japanese field armies engaged in what is now considered modern war.<sup>23</sup> “Mile after mile was clogged with army carts, taking every bit of space on the road north; anything moving south had to bump across open fields.”<sup>24</sup>

Captain Pershing’s observations of Japanese basing activities at Dairen illustrated an effective use of an advantageous locality from which operations could be projected and supported.<sup>25</sup> The Japanese base camp, which became an evolving military facility, supported the military

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<sup>21</sup> Vandiver, *Black Jack*, 359.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid.

<sup>23</sup> Dr. Peter Schifferle, author of *America’s School for War* argues in his book that there is a rigorous debate over the essence of modern war. He defines it as a combined arms tactical system using the developing technologies of motorization, mobile heavy field artillery, tanks, mechanized forces, and air power. What this implies, however, is that World War I is the first modern war. Modern war for the purpose of this monograph follows the argument of Edward Hagerman in his book *The American Civil War and The Origins of Modern Warfare*. Massive armies experiencing and leveraging new industrial technology as well as the ideological, social, and geographical realities of mid-nineteenth-century America defines modern warfare. That is not to say Dr. Schifferle’s definition of the employment of combined arms is not accurate, the rifled musket, and the devastating increase in firepower, as well as their integration with cavalry, maintains that combined arms are a fundamental aspect of modern warfare. However equally important is the industrial, technological aspects specifically in the case of the Civil War the integration of the railroad and the telegraph, which enabled transport, sustainment, and control of the mass armies.

<sup>24</sup> Smythe, *Guerrilla Warrior*, 121-122.

<sup>25</sup> Army Doctrine Reference Publication (ADRP) 3-0, *Operations* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2016), 2-37 to 2-42. According to Army and Joint US doctrine, a base is a locality from which operations are projected or supported through sustained operations.

operations of the deployed Japanese armies and provided the necessary support and services for sustained operations as they moved northward. Further, the basing at Dairen enabled the Japanese to employ their armies or land power simultaneously to achieve operational reach and depth specifically as they conducted operations south at Port Arthur and northward in pursuit of the Russians in Manchuria.<sup>26</sup> It is clear that Japanese General Staff, during their planning process had considered their capabilities as a joint force as well and their limitations, when deciding on Dairen as a base for operations. In doing so, they established and maintained strategic reach for their deploying forces and ensured sufficient operational reach to extend operations in time and space to reach the Russians at Mukden. The base at Dairen ensured the continuous supply of men, ammunition and other supply services. Captain Pershing also observed the requirement for intermediate bases, which are temporary locations, used for staging forces and pushing sustainment forward to the line of troops. Finally, it is also conceivable that Captain Pershing considered the concept of lodgments as they applied to the continuous landing of troops and materiel and their support for subsequent operations.<sup>27</sup> While not named lodgments, he understood the importance of identifying initial lodgments areas and their significant influence on future operations in Manchuria.

Captain Pershing did not fail to observe tactical lessons from the Japanese in Manchuria. He was particularly interested in the use of direct and indirect artillery.<sup>28</sup> However it was not the tactical emplacement or effects that occupied dominated his observations but rather the amount

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<sup>26</sup> ADRP 3-0, *Operations*, 2-56, according to current US doctrine operational reach is a tether comprised of the functions of intelligence, protection, sustainment as well as endurance, and relative combat power. The limit of a unit's operational reach is its culminating point. It balances the natural tension among endurance, momentum, and protection.

<sup>27</sup> ADRP 3-0, *Operations*, 2-42, according to current US doctrine lodgment is a designated area in a hostile or potentially hostile operational area that, when seized and held, makes the continuous landing of troops and materiel possible and provides maneuver space for subsequent operations.

<sup>28</sup> Richard Goldhurst, *Pipe, Clay, and Drill: John J. Pershing, the Classic American Soldier* (New York: Reader's Digest Press, 1977), 129. He found first that direct artillery fire from exposed positions quickly eliminated that battery of gun crews. Secondly, he found that indirect fire artillery, guided by spotters using telephones were extremely successful in destroying assaulting and defending troops, as Russian redoubts and trenches lacked overhead cover. Through the use of artillery and machine gun fire, the Japanese forced the Russians down, allowing the Japanese to move up and take the defended positions.

artillery used and the process for which the front line troops received resupply. As such he “took careful note of the massive expenditures of artillery ammunition required to dominate the modern battlefield and the vast amounts of other material needed to maintain hundreds of thousands of men in the field for a sustained campaign.”<sup>29</sup>

In Manchuria Captain Pershing was committed to gathering information to prepare for future commands. While initially limited in his ability to move about the battlefield, the Japanese eventually permitted him access to the front. He recognized that going to the front would be of fundamental professional value in understanding the conduct of warfare with modern means.<sup>30</sup> While acknowledging that he had not observed the siege at Port Arthur or the subsequent land battles at the Yalu River and into Manchuria, Captain Pershing absorbed all available information from the other attachés who had been with the Army before his arrival. When asked by a close friend if he were learning much in Manchuria Captain Pershing replied with “a great deal. I'm getting bits here and there and patching them together. All invaluable if I am ever to command in the field.”<sup>31</sup>

In the end, Captain Pershing took away valuable impressions of the future of warfare and the conditions in which American forces might fight. In addition to the importance of basing operations and operational reach, both enabled by the administration of logistics, he was able to visualize and understand both the conduct and scale of modern warfare and how it had evolved. Successful administration of logistics enabled Japanese operational reach as well as allowed their

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<sup>29</sup> Lacey, *Pershing*, 54.

<sup>30</sup> Palmer, *John J. Pershing*, 62.

<sup>31</sup> Smythe, *Guerrilla Warrior*, 122.

armies to maintain tempo against the Russians.<sup>32</sup> However, Captain Pershing did not lose sight of the fundamentals principles of warfare in his observations. Primarily he noted that successful Japanese maneuver did not ensure victory against the Russians. As Captain Pershing observed modern war in Manchuria, and he concluded that the nature of war had changed. Industrial powers engaged in modern wars could not achieve decisive victories through successful maneuvering of their troops on the enemy. Executed maneuvers did not necessarily mean success at the strategic level. In the case of the Russo-Japanese war, the Japanese had won nearly every tactical engagement to include the siege of Port Arthur and the battles at Mukden, yet the Russians were willing and able to continue the fight despite casualties reaching the hundreds of thousands. Quick victories by brilliant movements like Napoleon at Austerlitz were no longer possible.<sup>33</sup>

Captain Pershing recognized that commanders like the battlefield brigadier and major general could not feasibly lead the charge or personally direct the deployment of his men.<sup>34</sup> Modern armies were already five or ten times the size of the armies at Austerlitz and were spread out over dozens and in some cases hundreds of miles.<sup>35</sup> Despite the change in scale of modern warfare Captain Pershing concluded that the principles that governed the conduct of war had not changed, such as mass, maneuver, and perseverance. In fact, modern warfare further highlighted their absolute essentialness if one wanted to increase their probability of victory. Further, Captain Pershing realized that commanders at every echelon must be able to use every means possible to

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<sup>32</sup> ADRP, 3-0, 2-43, according to current US doctrine tempo is the relative speed and rhythm of military operations over time with respect to the enemy. It reflects the rate of military action, controlled by the commander throughout the conduct of operations, which enables him to keep the initiative. Achieved through simultaneous and sequential operations and the ability to synchronize operations in time and space to degrade enemy capabilities. Tempo requires avoiding unnecessary engagements that are not considered decisive. Finally, the commander achieves tempo through the enablement of subordinate initiative and individual action during operations.

<sup>33</sup> Goldhurst, *Pipe, Clay, and Drill*, 130.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*, 130-131.

<sup>35</sup> Lacey, *Pershing*, 54.

communicate with subordinates and higher headquarters as the battlefields became larger across time and space.<sup>36</sup>

Captain Pershing observed the Japanese application of the principles of joint operations known to him as the principles that governed warfare. Notably the Japanese were able to effectively maneuver their troops, in that they continually placed the Russians in a position of disadvantage through the flexible application of their forces, which was enabled by their effective basing operations. The Japanese maneuver was successful in exploiting successes as the Russians conducted their withdrawals, and it preserved their freedom of action as well as reducing their vulnerability by continually posing new problems for the enemy. However while successful in maneuvering they were not able to concentrate the effects of combat power at the most advantageous place and time to produce decisive results. Throughout the Russo-Japanese War the Japanese successfully concentrated their forces against the Russians but were not always able to mass the effects of combat power.

An example of successful Japanese maneuver is their victory at Nanshan Hill, the site of an early and important battle, which defended the Russian route to Dairen and Port Arthur. The Russians had constructed successive lines of trenches up the entire hillside supported by mines, machine guns, and barbed wire; it did not seem conceivable that the Japanese could have taken the position quickly.<sup>37</sup> The Japanese 2nd Army commanded by General Yasukata Oku had successfully seized the defended hill in less than a day after nine assaults. General Oku's three infantry divisions maneuvered while being supported by successful massed artillery barrages provided gunboats located offshore. The Russians did not understand the Japanese situation and did not communicate

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<sup>36</sup> Specifically commanders would have to incorporate modern means of communicating such as the telegraph and horseback curriers as the commanders of the civil war had done. Additionally commanders would have to be innovative and find new ways of communicating to meet the demands of a large spread out force. Prior to World War I communication advancements included electric light signaling, the wireless radio, the telephone and signaling using airplanes.

<sup>37</sup> Pershing, *My Life Before the War*, 224.

their retreat plan. So despite large casualties and an enormous expenditure of ammunition the Japanese were successful in seizing the hill. However the Japanese success was because the Russians had held back a significant portion of their force, not necessarily because of their effective use of maneuver and mass.<sup>38</sup> The Japanese did not have any reserves remaining and had the Russians committed their remaining forces they would have been successful in stopping the Japanese assault on Nashan Hill, which would have in turn blocked the routes to Dairen and Port Arthur.

Captain Pershing also observed that modern wars were not quickly won, and were now characterized by their long duration. He recognized that modern war and the encompassing battles and campaigns would take time to fight, “it took more than two weeks of fierce and grueling battle for the Japanese to take Mukden.” What this meant to Captain Pershing was that armies fighting in modern war had to achieve strict discipline, while maintaining exceptional stamina, a feat that the Japanese had demonstrated and one in which the Russians had failed to do.<sup>39</sup> Captain Pershing believed that the level of discipline and stamina required for modern war depended on a commitment to continuous training, specifically in marksmanship and target procedures. For Captain Pershing, the “bayonet has become a moral and not a physical weapon,” one that future battle would depend on proper training and the efficient tactical use of arms, which in turn built discipline and stamina.<sup>40</sup> What he observed was the perseverance of the Japanese armies, which was necessary to achieve their national objectives.<sup>41</sup> The Japanese demonstrated perseverance in that they showed resolute and persistence in pursuit of their national goals despite large

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<sup>38</sup> Pershing, *My Life Before the War*, 224.

<sup>39</sup> Goldhurst, *Pipe, Clay, and Drill*, 130.

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*, 131.

<sup>41</sup> ADRP 3-0, *Operations*, Table 2-1, and Joint Publication (JP) 3-0, *Joint Operations* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2017), A-4. Perseverance ensures the commitment necessary to attain the national strategic end state.

expenditures of human lives and material. In the end, it was the Japanese ability to continue the war until diplomatic measures could end the war.

## Critical Observations

The Russo-Japanese War demonstrated the fundamental elements of modern warfare and provided Captain Pershing with a foundation for understanding and visualizing warfare. His experience in Manchuria would ultimately help him as a commander, describe an approach for conducting modern warfare, specifically with regards to large-scale mobilization and operations. Captain Pershing's greatest lesson learned during the Russo-Japanese War was the fundamental importance of administration of logistics. Modern war was fought through the precise administration of supply and transport over vast swaths of terrain, supporting large armies, spread out over hundreds and thousands of miles. Success or failure of future wars was rooted in the ability of industrialized nations to master command and control and the issues of logistics.<sup>42</sup> The basing operations at Dairen enabled Japanese operational reach as it served as the point of entry and distribution for food, artillery pieces, munitions and troop transports arriving from Japan. The effective administration of logistics primarily the distribution of supplies from Dairen along the South Manchurian Rail to Mukden, prevented Marshal Oyama's Japanese Armies in Manchuria from culminating their offensive operations against the Russians.

Captain Pershing also learned that the scale of modern warfare would significantly impact the ability of the commander to command and control his men in the field. In order to be successful commanders would have to employ innovative means of communicating and directing battle and could not disregard the principles so warfare. He found that successful maneuvering does not mean a decisive victory, and that modern wars are characterized by long duration. As a result the fighting

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<sup>42</sup> Jim Lacey, *Pershing* (New York: St. Martin's Griffin, 2008), 54.



force must possess perseverance; achieved through physical fitness and disciplined which would enable sustained battles and campaigns.

## The Punitive Expedition 1916 – 1917: Experiences in Command

### Strategic Context

On 9 March 1916, Mexican Revolutionary General, Francisco “Pancho” Villa, led an attack on the American New Mexican border town of Columbus. The raid resulted in the death of eighteen American civilian and soldiers.<sup>43</sup> The attack on Columbus was the second brutal and premeditated attack against American citizens since January of that year. The other consisted of Pancho Villa's men or “Villistas” holding up a train on its way to the Cusi Mining property in the Mexican State of Chihuahua. In that attack, eighteen Americans were taken off the train, stripped and executed.<sup>44</sup> Pancho Villa's attack on Columbus was just one of many events that led to the rising tensions between Mexico and the United States since the overthrow of Mexican President José de la Cruz Porfirio Díaz in 1911.<sup>45</sup>

After Porfirio Díaz' successor was murdered, counterrevolutionary General Victoriano Huerta had briefly controlled Mexico, and was a strong and capable leader. It is conceivable that he could have protected foreign interests in Mexico. However the Huerta Government never gained the support of the United States Government, or rather never won the support of President

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<sup>43</sup> Smythe, *Guerrilla Warrior*, 217.

<sup>44</sup> John J. Pershing and John T. Greenwood, *My Life before the World War, 1860-1917: A Memoir* (Lexington, KY: University Press of Kentucky, 2013), 335.

<sup>45</sup> Pershing, *My Life before the World War*, 331. Porfirio Díaz' had harshly ruled Mexico as a dictator for over thirty-five years, yet he had maintained relatively peaceful relations with the United States, specifically with regards to foreign capital which had been encouraged to enter the country. He had also allowed Mexican natural resources to be owned and controlled by Americans, which contributed significantly to the improvement, development, and material prosperity of Mexico during his rule. After Porfirio Díaz' removal from office, his successor Francisco Madero was murdered. Mexico fell into rapid disintegration, plagued by persistent banditry, violence, and general insecurity. American foreign interests including lives and property were at perpetual risk.

Woodrow Wilson.<sup>46</sup> As such President Wilson set out to eliminate General Huerta, and in February of 1914, the United States lifted its embargo on arms sales to General Huerta's adversaries the revolutionaries Emiliano Zapata in the south, and Venustiano Carranza and Francisco Pancho Villa in the north. On 21 April that same year, Vera Cruz was occupied, and the government of Mexico was closed off from its source of customs revenue and from its importation of munitions for war.<sup>47</sup>

José Carranza and his northern revolutionary Constitutionalist Army eventually defeated the counter-revolutionary regime of General Huerta, forcing his resignation and exile from the country. As José Carranza secured the power of the pre-constitutional government, his ties with fellow revolutionaries, Emiliano Zapata and Pancho Villa quickly deteriorated. They could not agree on the future political and social reforms for Mexico, which ultimately led to their complete break. While Zapata did not present a problem to the Carranza government, Pancho Villa adamantly continued his opposition. When the United States and President Wilson officially recognized Carranza as the legitimate leader and the head of state of Mexico, Pancho Villa felt betrayed.<sup>48</sup> Attacks along the border in both the United States and Mexico increased in both their brutality and frequency, and it appeared that the Carranza Government was unwilling or unable to control the situation.

The attacks at Columbus enraged the American people, and they wanted retribution. They called on the government to launch an expedition to hunt down Pancho Villa and hold him accountable. On 10 March 1916 the Secretary of War, Newton D. Baker authorized the expedition, under President Wilson direction, "that an armed force be sent to Mexico with the sole object of capturing Villa and preventing any further raids by his band, and with scrupulous regard to the

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<sup>46</sup> Pershing, *My Life before the World War*, 331.

<sup>47</sup> Ibid.

<sup>48</sup> Ibid., 333-334.

sovereignty of Mexico.”<sup>49</sup> Despite the authorization, the War Department was unprepared for this type of operation, and all prior planning had been on the assumption of a full-scale war with Mexico,<sup>50</sup> in the end, it would be a delicate mission, to enter Mexico a friendly country, with an invading army and do so in such a way as to not engage the Mexican Army and commit the United States to war.<sup>51</sup>

In 1913 General Pershing was transferred to Fort Bliss, where he commanded the 6<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> Infantry of the 8<sup>th</sup> Brigade. He recognized early on the precarious political situation on the Mexican border. As such he took great pains to prepare his men for what he understood to be the future operational environment. General Pershing ensured his men patrolled his border section of responsibility and insisted on rigorous training. He wanted to make sure that when his division saw combat, they would be ready, and “he started with a three-mile stint and worked his dust-bleached, sun worn troops up to twenty-five miles a day.”<sup>52</sup> General Pershing took his men out for rotating instructional maneuvers, and he made sure that his officers were able to conduct small, medium, and large unit handling, and of the 8<sup>th</sup> Infantry Brigade, he said that it was “as well up on the art of war as it could be without having seen actual service.”<sup>53</sup> General Pershing wrote an article for the *US Infantry Journal* published in July-August 1914 on the requirements for successful infantrymen in modern war. Primarily General Pershing advocated for deliberate instructions for soldiers on their required duties, to achieve the highest standard of discipline and training in a time of peace. He encouraged teaching pride in the profession of arms and conveying to young leaders and soldiers that their most valuable assets were self-discipline, obedience, and well-developed

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<sup>49</sup> Smythe, *Guerrilla Warrior*, 220.

<sup>50</sup> Ibid.

<sup>51</sup> Lacey, *Pershing*, 79.

<sup>52</sup> Vandiver, *Black Jack*, 585.

<sup>53</sup> Ibid., 589.

muscles. Finally, he held that active interest in education and training should be the aim of every officer and leader of men.<sup>54</sup> It is evident from his preparations and training for a war that General Pershing understood that his future mission would likely be a long drawn out movement in harsh conditions along the northwestern border terrain of Mexico. Any future missions would require his men to possess excellent understanding of maneuvers, discipline, and endurance.

## Major Events during the Campaign

Two days after the attack on Columbus, General Pershing and his division were selected to lead the expedition across the border into Mexico in pursuit of Pancho Villa.<sup>55</sup> The Chief of Staff of the Army, Major General Huger L. Scott and the Assistant Chief of Staff of the Army, Major General Tasker H. Bliss, recommended General Pershing for the command. According to Secretary Baker, General Pershing “was respected to be absolutely loyal to the policy of the civil authorities under whom he was serving.”<sup>56</sup> The War Department sent very specific guidance to General Pershing with regards to conditions for conducting and terminating the expedition. The War Department provided him with his military end-state, described as the set of desired future conditions that should exist when the operation ends.<sup>57</sup> General Pershing was instructed to follow Pancho Villa and his band across the Mexico border, until such a time that the de facto government in Mexico was able to relieve the American forces, or at a time when Pancho Villa and his band had been broken up. With those conditions met, American troops were instructed to withdraw back to the United States. Additionally, the War Department notified General Frederick Funston Commander of the Southern Department at Fort Sam Houston San Antonio, Texas and General Pershing to contract civilian transportation support on both sides of the border to support the

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<sup>54</sup> Vandiver, *Black Jack*, 586.

<sup>55</sup> Pershing, *My Life before the World War*, 336.

<sup>56</sup> Smythe, *Guerrilla Warrior*, 220.

<sup>57</sup> ADRP 3-0, *Operations*, 2-21.

expedition. Both Generals Funston and Pershing were directed by the War Department to use the aeroplanes stationed at San Antonio for observation, and intelligence gathering on Pancho Villa's location.<sup>58</sup>

General Pershing and his men carried a copy of the proclamation signed by the Mexican Secretary of War and Navy, stating that the governments of the United States and Mexico had entered into an agreement, which mutually permitted crossing the border in pursuit of bandits. The American government had interpreted the agreement to be retroactive and thus authorized to enter into Mexico in pursuit of Pancho Villa. Conversely, the Mexican government believed the agreement to be in effect for future cross-border attacks.<sup>59</sup>

While General Pershing's forces did not encounter resistance as they entered Palomas, the sentiment of the Mexican Government and the people of Chihuahua were clear; they did not want the Americans in Mexico. They viewed General Pershing's men as "gringos...as ranchers, users of the scant good lands, and diggers of gold and silver."<sup>60</sup> Ultimately the Mexican government believed that the American Government and General Pershing's forces were in breach of that agreement. As a result, General Pershing and his troops faced both open and disguised hostility from the locals for the entirety of the expedition. Locals often misled the expedition and provided the commander with false information. Even the attitude of Carranza and his armed forces were resentful and caused considerable difficulty to General Pershing and his men.<sup>61</sup> General Pershing wrote to General Funston that, "if this campaign should eventually prove successful it will be without the assistance of any native this side of the line."<sup>62</sup> The Mexican government was resentful of the American's entry into their country and as such General Pershing had to be politically aware

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<sup>58</sup> Pershing, *My Life before the World War*, 337.

<sup>59</sup> Smythe, *Guerrilla Warrior*, 224.

<sup>60</sup> Vandiver, *Black Jack*, 613.

<sup>61</sup> Ibid., 634.

<sup>62</sup> Pershing, *My Life before the World War*, 344.

of his actions and those of his men and their ramifications on the American government's interests. The sensitive political situation could quickly deteriorate which would have significant negative operational impacts on General Pershing's expedition. If Mexico declared war on the United States, General Pershing, and his men could be conceivably cut off from their base of supply, as his line of communication stretched for hundreds of miles through Mexican territory unprotected.

General Pershing received further instruction from Adjutant General, Henry McCain on the composition and order of movement for the expedition.<sup>63</sup> The first column would depart from Columbus, presumably as a demonstration of national resolve and commitment to the people of that town, for the attack committed by Pancho Villa against them. The Columbus column would consist of the 13<sup>th</sup> Cavalry and one battery of horse artillery, a company of engineers and the 1<sup>st</sup> Aero Squadron composed of eight aeroplanes. The second column would depart from Hachita, New Mexico specifically from Culberson's Ranch, which was fifty miles west of Columbus, and would consist of the 7<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> Cavalry minus two troops from the later, and one battery of horse artillery. The War Department further directed that a reinforced brigade of 6<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> Infantry, 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion, 4<sup>th</sup> Field Artillery Regiment and other various auxiliary troops were to follow the column from Columbus. Additional engineer companies were ordered to Fort Bliss to await further orders as well as additional signal support.<sup>64</sup>

Under General Pershing's supervision, his men crossed the border into Mexico on 15 March 1916 from Columbus. He then drove the fifty miles to Hachita New Mexico, where Colonel George A. Dodd was waiting from him with the second column. That column departed early the next morning on 16 March. The two columns met in Casas Grandes on the 17<sup>th</sup> and General

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<sup>63</sup> Stout, *Border Conflict*, 46. Advised that the Secretary of War envisioned two columns entering Mexico, a tactic often used during the American Indian Wars fought primarily during the 19<sup>th</sup> century between various Native American tribes and the American government during its westward expansion. The expeditionary mission to find Pancho Villa appeared similar in nature except for this time it was conducted in another country's sovereign territory.

<sup>64</sup> Vandiver, *Black Jack*, 606.

Pershing again reviewed the situation as well as his greatest concern, logistics. To catch Pancho Villa, General Pershing needed to keep him north of Durango and Sinaloa, the Mexican states south of Chihuahua. General Pershing's success depended on moving fast with his two cavalry columns. To do that, they needed supplies for the entirety of the route, which might stretch hundreds of miles.<sup>65</sup> While the two columns departing from New Mexico had made good time, despite the roads, their condition would eventually deteriorate from extended use. General Pershing described the road conditions as "the road soon became a series of ruts that filled quickly with powdered dust that rose in clouds in dry weather and in wet weather turned to muck often hub deep, frequently required a whole day to get a stalled train over these trenches."<sup>66</sup> General Pershing decided to make Columbus his base of operations, and he chose the town of Colonia Dublán as his forward base. He placed an engineer regiment in charge of the road situation to ensure that subsequent supplies and additional troops moving south from Columbus could do so as unhindered as possible.<sup>67</sup> While at Colonia Dublán, General Pershing received information that Pancho Villa and five hundred of his men were rumored to be in the vicinity of San Miguel de Babicora, an area fifty-five miles south of Casas Grandes where he and his men were gathering supplies and recuperating.<sup>68</sup> General Pershing decided to send one of the columns to the east consisting of the 7<sup>th</sup> Cavalry, under Colonel J. B. Erwin and a column to the west of San Miguel which would consist of the 10<sup>th</sup> Cavalry, commanded by Colonel W.C. Brown. They were intended to cut off or strike Pancho Villa's force in his rear. A third column also from the 10<sup>th</sup> Cavalry, commanded by Major E.W. Evans departing from the west, would intercept Pancho Villa's retreat further south.<sup>69</sup> The westward columns would travel by rail along the Mexico Northwestern Railroad. Colonel Brown's column departed at Rucio

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<sup>65</sup> Vandiver, *Black Jack*, 611.

<sup>66</sup> Pershing, *My Life before the World War*, 340.

<sup>67</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>68</sup> *Ibid.*, 342.

<sup>69</sup> Pershing, *My Life before the World War*, 344.

just thirty miles south of Colonia Dublán, while Major Evan's column continued on the rail further south and detrained at Musica.<sup>70</sup> General Pershing believed that at the very least his initial columns south would give him an idea of Pancho Villa's intended movements and a basis for further operations.

Colonel Brown reached Rucio on 20 March and marched east to San Miguel de Babicora, but the reports of Pancho Villa's presence turned out to be false. Major Evan's column was also unsuccessful in locating Pancho Villa further east and to the south.<sup>71</sup> The eastern column was further divided into four operational detachments as they moved southward. As General Pershing's forces moved south, his concept was to catch Pancho Villa by pursuing and surrounding him with his detachments or "flying columns" which were expected to be highly mobile and capable of self-sustainment from the land. General Pershing provided his detachment commanders with basic mission type orders, and expected them to operate semi-independently under his intent and minimal guidance, as they gathered intelligence to locate and destroy Pancho Villa. The columns communicated with headquarters when possible, but mostly the detachment commanders were allowed to make decisions without specific orders.<sup>72</sup>

Eventually, the eastern column was consolidated near Galeana but was also ultimately unsuccessful and on identifying Pancho Villa's whereabouts.<sup>73</sup> Shortly after Galeana, General Pershing put Colonel Dodd in operational command of the 7<sup>th</sup> Cavalry and the 10<sup>th</sup> Cavalry and moved his forces south near El Valle, and they eventually reached San Miguel de Babicora on 25 March.<sup>74</sup> Colonel Dodd continued to move his forces south, around Cruces and finally onto

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<sup>70</sup> Smythe, *Guerrilla Warrior*, 225.

<sup>71</sup> Ibid.

<sup>72</sup> Julie Irene Prieto, *The Mexican Expedition, 1916-1917* (Washington, DC: Center of Military History, United States Army, 2016), 29-30.

<sup>73</sup> Vandiver, *Black Jack*, 618.

<sup>74</sup> Ibid., 619-620.



Namiquipa, a location where Pancho Villa presumably was located according to intelligence reports. The 7<sup>th</sup> Cavalry headed toward Providencia looking for signs of Pancho Villa, and on the 28<sup>th</sup> reached Bachiniva, where they received a promising report that Pancho Villa had been in a fight at Guerrero and that he was still there and possibly wounded. Despite receiving orders from General Pershing to wait in Bachiniva, Colonel Dodd made the decision to march his forces fifty-five miles through the night to reach Pancho Villa near Guerrero. When the 7<sup>th</sup> Cavalry arrived at Guerrero, where they attacked in two parties, flushing out a force of about five hundred Villistas. Pancho Villa's men are caught by surprise, and fought fiercely, but were finally pushed out of the town, where Colonel Dodd's men pursued them. The 7<sup>th</sup> Cavalry's engagement was one of the largest events in General Pershing's expedition, with an estimated thirty Villistas killed, two machine guns captured, a large number of horses and other equipment.<sup>75</sup> Unfortunately, however, the engagement was not successful in capturing Pancho Villa, and Colonel Dodd moved his men to Namiquipa to rest his men and horses and to regain contact with General Pershing.<sup>76</sup> The engagement highlights the importance of mission orders and intent rather than the specific guidance provided by General Pershing, and consequently, Colonel Dodd nearly caught Pancho Villa.

After Colonel Dodd's meeting with Pancho Villa's men at Guerrero, General Pershing decided to move his headquarters south one hundred and forty-four miles, from Colonia Dublán to San Geronimo, located half way between Namiquipa and Bachiniva. The move would allow General Pershing to push his forces further south toward the border town of Parral near the Mexican State of Durango. Intelligence reporting indicated that Pancho Villa was heading in that direction. At San Geronimo, General Pershing planned an advance to Parral, using three parallel columns under Colonel Brown, Major Tompkins, and Major Howze. The three advancing columns

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<sup>75</sup> Frank Tompkins, *Chasing Villa: The Story Behind the Story of Pershing's Expedition into Mexico* (Harrisburg, PA.: The Military Service Publishing Company, 1934), 87.

<sup>76</sup> Prieto, *The Mexican Expedition*, 32-33.

encountered both Mexican Carrancistas and Villistas. When they met Villistas, they forced them to retreat after brief skirmishes. The Carrancistas often confronted the US Cavalry and demanded that they leave Mexico. General Luis Herrera, the former governor of Chihuahua, personally visited General Pershing in Geronimo with his unit of cavalry, in early April.<sup>77</sup> He warned General Pershing of the possible confrontation between his forces and those of the United States, and the growing anti-American sentiment within the Mexican population. General Herrera tried to convince General Pershing to return north and even went as far as to say that Pancho Villa was dead.<sup>78</sup> Despite General Herrera's displeasure, General Pershing kept his men on the trail of Pancho Villa. Given further reinforcements from the War Department to support his extended line of communication, General Pershing once again moved his headquarters further south and to Satevó.<sup>79</sup>

On 10 April, Major Tompkins and one hundred of his men also were met by a combination of duplicitous Carrancistas and a mob of angry Mexicans in the town of Parral. While having been invited into the town by a captain of the federal army garrisoned there, General Ismael Lozano, denied any knowledge of their presence and said he was surprised that the Americans were in Parral, further advising them to leave. Major Tompkins agreed and moved his men to a location that General Lozano and his men had designated outside of town. As Major Tompkins and his men were leaving an angry crowd had gathered around them and followed them out of town. When Major Tompkins and his men arrived at the designated campsite, they realized that not only was it not defensible but that a group of over 550 Mexican soldiers began assembling in the hills around them heavily supported by the crowd of Mexican civilians.<sup>80</sup> Eventually, Major Tompkins was wounded by shots fired, and another American soldier killed despite his attempts to withdraw from the area.

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<sup>77</sup> Goldhurst, *Pipe, Clay, and Drill*, 207.

<sup>78</sup> Pershing, *My Life before the World War*, 350.

<sup>79</sup> Goldhurst, *Pipe, Clay, and Drill*, 209.

<sup>80</sup> Pershing, *My Life before the World War*, 351.

After retreating some distance, Major Tomkins' men were able to form a skirmish line and returned fire, killing forty-five Mexican soldiers. At that point, the Mexican soldiers stopped pursuing Major Tomkins, and they continued their retreat to Santa Cruz with two soldiers killed and six wounded.<sup>81</sup>

The situation with Major Tomkins and Parral caused a significant increase in political uncertainty for the Wilson Administration; Carrancistas had deliberately ambushed US Cavalry in Mexico. As a result, General Pershing provided recommendations on the way ahead for the expedition in Mexico. Ultimately, General Pershing understood that his key to any future success in the pursuit of Pancho Villa remained in sustained logistics and more efficient communications.

General Pershing also recognized that both his logistics and communications were vulnerable to small-scale attacks conducted by the remnants of Pancho Villa's men who were still operating throughout Chihuahua. General Pershing also knew that the Mexican government was still unable and unwilling to catch Pancho Villa, control his men or stop border crossing into the United States. As such General Pershing recommended to General Funston to consolidate and strengthen his position within Chihuahua. He wanted to solidify his supply routes through the use of the Mexican Northwestern Railroad and to begin small-scale patrols to root out the Villa's men within the Chihuahua. In short, his recommendation to General Funston was the complete and immediate capture of the city and state of Chihuahua and the seizure of all railroads therein.<sup>82</sup>

While waiting for approval from the War Department, General Pershing consolidated his forces and moved them northward towards San Antonio. On 24 April, he was authorized to hold his position at San Antonio and any other points he thought necessary for the continuation of the expedition. In the end, General Pershing established five districts with a combination of artillery, cavalry, and infantry assigned to each area and had his men patrol the areas looking for remnants of Pancho Villa's men. He was still very aware of the political situation with the Mexican de facto government as well as

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<sup>81</sup> Goldhurst, *Pipe, Clay, and Drill*, 212.

<sup>82</sup> Pershing, *My Life before the World War*, 352.

the volatile situation on the ground between his forces, the Carrancistas, and the civilian population.<sup>83</sup>

The situation in Parral caused both the Mexican and American government to send officials to meet and come to an agreement on a future course of action for the expedition. Generals Scott and Funston met with General Obregón, President Carranza's Secretary of War and Navy, in Juarez, Mexico at the end of April into early May. However, the two governments could not come to an agreement. General Obregón was adamant that the United States immediately withdraw their forces from Mexico. Based on General Obregón's no compromise approach and escalation in threats, Generals Scott and Funston recommended to the President that he mobilize the National Guard to the southern border. President Wilson agreed when in early May there were two additional cross-border attacks on the towns of Glen Springs, and Boquillas, TX. On 8 May, President Wilson federalized the National Guard units from Texas, Arizona, and New Mexico into national service, which comprised of roughly 5,000 men most of which were infantry.<sup>84</sup> With the mobilizing of the National Guard, President Wilson also ordered General Pershing to withdraw his troops to Colonia Dublán; a position later modified to Namiquipa.<sup>85</sup>

As General Pershing's troops consolidated and moved northward, the US National Guard mobilized on the American southern border. These actions resulted in an increase in boldness and hostility from the Carrancistas and Villistas towards General Pershing's men. Eventually, President Wilson decided to mobilize the remainder of the National Guard units, which totaled an additional 110,000 National Guardsmen.<sup>86</sup> The situation in Mexico was escalating quickly. The Carrancistas consolidated their forces and were establishing points along the railroads to the east and west of

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<sup>83</sup> Pershing, *My Life before the World War*, 353.

<sup>84</sup> Alexander F. Barnes, "On the Border: The National Guard Mobilizes for War in 1916," [www.army.mil](https://www.army.mil/article/162413), February 29, 2016, accessed December 13, 2016, <https://www.army.mil/article/162413>.

<sup>85</sup> Pershing, *My Life before the World War*, 355.

<sup>86</sup> Barnes, "On the Border: The National Guard Mobilizes for War in 1916."

General Pershing's men. By early June, General Pershing received information that there were 10,000 men in the vicinity of Ahumada and that they had orders to prevent the movement of US forces in any direction but north. To prevent being caught by surprise General Pershing sent out reconnaissance detachments in the direction of Ahumada to obtain more information on the Carrancistas and their movements.

On 21 June, Captain Charles T. Boyd of C Troop and Captain Lewis S. Morey of K Troop of the 10<sup>th</sup> Cavalry, entered the town of Carrizal with their respective troops despite their orders to avoid contact with Mexican forces. General Pershing specifically instructed Captain Boyd that contact could ultimately result in the two nations moving towards war.<sup>87</sup> For unknown reasons, Captain Boyd decided to enter the town of Carrizal, and the Mexican soldiers shot at them killing him and wounding Captain Morey. In all ten American soldiers were killed, ten wounded, and nineteen caught as prisoners. The rest of the Americans escaped and made their way to Colonia Dublán. The Mexicans at Carrizal had also lost their commanding officer, General Gomez, as well as thirty-three enlisted men with fifty-three others wounded.<sup>88</sup>

In the end, the American government negotiated diplomatically for the release of the prisoners and the situation in Carrizal was the last clash between General Pershing's men and Carrancistas for the rest of the expedition. The American and Mexican government met several times to negotiate and reach an agreement for the withdrawal of American forces from Mexico. During the negotiations, which lasted from September 1916 to February 1917, General Pershing and his troops consolidated in El Valle and Colonia Dublán, and he took the opportunity to train his forces with a particular emphasis on combat exercises. He took advantage of the officers with expert marksmanship and set up a three-month training course, which included instruction on the

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<sup>87</sup> Pershing, *My Life before the World War*, 359.

<sup>88</sup> *Ibid.*, 358.

machine gun. In late January, General Pershing received the order to withdraw, and on the 5<sup>th</sup> he had assembled his men at Palomas for the movement across the border.<sup>89</sup>

## Critical Experiences

The administration of logistics proved to be an enormous issue for General Pershing. While the President via the War Department authorized the expedition, it did not ensure that the preparations and coordination for support would be a smooth process. On his arrival to Columbus, General Pershing realized that training and preparation along the border had not progressed at the same rate, “by all military standards Columbus was a mess... troops were arriving from various places, were looking for campsites, for supplies for orders, for someone in charge.”<sup>90</sup> Of particular concern was that there was no chief of quartermaster, no one to organize the incoming supplies, designate depots, mark equipment, and sort through the general chaotic situation.<sup>91</sup> Equally concerning was the lack of ordnance resupply, it appeared that “a continuous flow of ordnance from the base to the troops ... seems not to have been anticipated and provided for.”<sup>92</sup>

General Pershing was also the issue of execution of logistics. Carranza's de facto government vetoed the use of their trains along the Mexico Northwestern Railroad, which connected Mexico with El Paso. Logistically this meant that the General Pershing's expedition had to use horses, automobiles, and even motorcycles to support the expedition, making the Punitive Expedition the first American motorized campaign.<sup>93</sup> Despite their obvious benefits of mobility and endurance, the motorized vehicles created additional difficulties, as they required fuel, regular

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<sup>89</sup> Pershing, *My Life before the World War*, 362.

<sup>90</sup> Vandiver, *Black Jack*, 608.

<sup>91</sup> Ibid.

<sup>92</sup> Ibid., 609.

<sup>93</sup> Stout, *Border Conflict*, 45. Even though this was the first American motorized campaign the armies in Europe were already using similar motorized vehicles. The reliance on motorization was another indicator to General Pershing as to the changing conduct of modern warfare.

maintenance, and an abundance of spare parts due to the difficulty of the Chihuahua terrain, which consisted of few roads and the single rail line.<sup>94</sup> On the other hand, the horses required additional food, which the American forces would have to carry, creating a heavier toll on the animals. The logistical situation for supply and movement was precarious, so after assessing the situation, General Pershing decided despite the Mexican Government's lack of approval to request American rolling stock.<sup>95</sup> General Pershing was willing to assume political risk to improve his logistical situation to pursue Pancho Villa more effectively. In the end, the American government approved a train for the expedition, but it did not completely eliminate all of General Pershing's logistical problems.

Another experience that impacted General Pershing during the expedition was that of communications. He was entirely reliant on field telegraph wire, and intermittent, unreliable telegraphs, scout messengers, and eventually, he had to incorporate his aeroplanes for the task of relaying messages to his commanders far forward. Ultimately General Pershing overcame his communication and control limitations by providing mission orders to his subordinate commanders and trusted them to make decisions within his intent. An example is the initiative Colonel Dodd demonstrated in his decision to march his forces fifty-five miles through the night to reach Pancho Villa near Guerrero. The 7<sup>th</sup> Cavalry caught Pancho Villa's men by surprise, recovered a significant amount of enemy equipment and nearly resulted in the capture of Pancho Villa.

Finally while the expedition was not successful in capturing Pancho Villa, it was still a valuable experience for General Pershing, his men, and the National Guard. For General Pershing, there were also several strategic lessons to be learned, primarily the balance between strategic requirements and achieving operational requirements. The possibility of war breaking out between Mexico and the United States had plagued the entire expedition. A situation created by the faulty

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<sup>94</sup> Stout, *Border Conflict*, 42.

<sup>95</sup> Vandiver, *Black Jack*, 616.

assumption that the Americans would be accepted if not welcomed into their country in pursuit of Pancho Villa. While General Pershing's military end-state was clear and his objectives clear for his men, the lack of support and open hostility of the Mexican government, their soldiers, and the civilian population often constrained his movements. The political and geographical environment significantly impacted General Pershing's operational reach and his ability to maneuver. He was unable to overcome the limitations of accurate intelligence, inadequate protection, and sustainment, which then, in turn, affected his endurance, and his ability to place the enemy in a position disadvantage through the flexible application of his available combat power.<sup>96</sup>

## World War I, 1917 -1918: Commanding the AEF

### Strategic Context

On 31 January 1917, Germany officially resumed unrestricted submarine warfare; a policy they had suspended since 1915. It was an attempt to stop merchant ships traveling to Britain to cut them off from war sustainment efforts. Germany assumed that if they were successful, the war would last no longer than five more months.<sup>97</sup> In March, shortly after their policy shift, German U-boats sunk three American merchant ships. The attacks resulted in a substantial loss of American lives.<sup>98</sup> Germany's policy shifts, as well as the increasing loss of American lives, resulted in an increase in populace support for the United States to enter the war. By early April 1917, it was evident to President Wilson that it was necessary for the United States to join the war, despite his attempts to remain neutral. President Wilson justified American involvement as a means of making

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<sup>96</sup> ADRP 3-0, *Operations*, 2-56.

<sup>97</sup> Dupuy and Dupuy, *The Harper Encyclopedia of Military History*, 1067.

<sup>98</sup> Ibid. The Germans had acknowledged the possibility that the United States would intervene as a result of resuming unrestricted submarine warfare. However, it was a risk that Emperor Kaiser Wilhelm II, was willing to take. As a mitigation strategy, the Germans attempted to gain an alliance with Mexico that could potentially divert American attention to a threat much closer to their borders.



the world safe for democracy, it would be the “war to end all wars,” and on 6 April 1917, Congress voted and declared war on Germany.<sup>99</sup>

The United States entered the War in Europe despite the lack of any preparations, or conception of how to mobilize, train, deploy or fight.<sup>100</sup> Unfortunately, this also meant that the United States' wartime munitions and equipment industries were underdeveloped.<sup>101</sup> Further personal manning of the American armed forces compared to those of its allies, which had armies in the millions, was significantly lacking.<sup>102</sup>

To compound the issue of manpower, many Americans, policy makers, and allied leadership believed in the policy of amalgamation. Their concern was primarily with timing and thought that the United States should not waste time overcoming the challenges of creating, training and equipping a large national army. Those for amalgamation wanted American raw recruits sent to Europe to fill the depleted divisions and corps at the front lines currently held by British and French forces.<sup>103</sup> However, President Wilson rejected the idea of amalgamation, he believed it would significantly degrade national honor, and it would also decrease the visibility of the American contribution to the war and any subsequent peace negotiations between the conflicting nations. As

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<sup>99</sup> Lacey, *Pershing*, 86.

<sup>100</sup> Goldhurst, *Pipe, Clay, and Drill*, 234-235. Primarily this was because of President Wilson's commitment to neutrality, and in 1916 he had directed the armed forces to stop military war planning.

<sup>101</sup> Lacey, *Pershing*, 93 and Pershing, *My Experiences in the First World War*, vol.1, 26-27. By 1917, the United States did not have any aircraft factories or large-scale production capabilities for artillery guns or shells. It also meant that even simple fielding decisions for the force had not been made, such as the adoption and wide-scale use of the machine gun. As of May 1917, the AEF has less than 1,500 machine guns, 285,000 not yet issued Springfield rifles, 400 light field guns, 150 heavy field guns and only 55 training aircraft without war equipment and only thirty-five pilots that could fly.

<sup>102</sup> Dupuy and Dupuy, *The Harper Encyclopedia of Military History*, 1068. The American Regular Army in 1917, which consisted of the National Guard and the draftees produced by the Selective Service Act enacted on 19 May, later that same year, made up a force of only 200,000 men and 9,000 officers.

<sup>103</sup> Pershing, *My Experiences in the First World War*, vol.1, 30-33.

such, American soldiers would fight under an American commander, in American units, under the American flag.<sup>104</sup>

In early May of 1917, President Wilson and Secretary of War Baker selected General Pershing who had been promoted to Major General shortly after the Punitive Expedition, to command the first division leaving for Europe. After a personal interview, Secretary Baker informed General Pershing that he was to command all American forces in Europe. General Pershing was selected because of his consistent loyalty to the civilian government and his recent field experience commanding a large force during the Punitive Expedition.<sup>105</sup> After his selection, General Pershing was directed by the President to proceed to Europe with his staff, consult with the French war office, and establish the necessary bases and lines of communication and depots required for the active participation of Americans at the front. Most importantly General Pershing received direction that the forces of the United States be separate and a distinct component of the combined forces, preserving its identity.<sup>106</sup> By having the full support of President Wilson on the issue of amalgamation gave General Pershing the authority to resist the relentless demand for forces by the Allies for the remainder of the war.<sup>107</sup>

## AEF Elements of Operational Art and the Principles of Joint Operations

### Operational Art

General Pershing had the power and responsibility to build, and supply a massive army, and prepare them for modern war. Mobilization, logistics, and training proved to be the greatest

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<sup>104</sup> Lacey, *Pershing*, 96.

<sup>105</sup> Other considerations for General Pershing's selection was the perception that General Pershing lacked political ambitions, which could potentially threaten the current administration, plans for future elections.

<sup>106</sup> Goldhurst *Pipe, Clay, and Drill*, 359-360.

<sup>107</sup> *Ibid.*, 260 and Lacey, *Pershing*, 96. President Wilson wanted to keep a distinct American force to maintain visibility and highlight the United States' contribution to the war, which would provide leverage during peace negotiations.

challenges facing the AEF. General Pershing realized that his success depended on his headquarters staff, which he needed to solve those issues. As such General Pershing selected Major James G. Harbord as his chief of staff and immediately instructed the staff to study the issues of mobilization, logistics, and training challenges that lay ahead. Specifically he had them look at potential locations for AEF employment in France. General Pershing also directed the staff to consider potential points of debarkation for American troops and equipment arriving in Europe, as well a logistical footprint to support the forward line of troops.<sup>108</sup>

While en route to Europe General Pershing and his staff began to visualize and understand the nature of the operational environment, the scope, and potential objectives for the AEF. The most critical decision with the largest impact would be the location of the American area of operations. According to General Pershing from a purely military standpoint, the most logical place for the employment of the American armies was on the Lorraine front.<sup>109</sup> Lorraine not only had adequate training areas which were suitable for the development and employment of a large, independent force, but it also provided opportunities for an American offensive which included decisive military objectives. General Pershing understood that an objective should be the purpose of every military operation, conducted towards a clearly defined, decisive, and achievable goal, supporting the overall strategic objective identified to resolve the conflict.<sup>110</sup> The enemy's position opposite of Lorraine covered not only the coalfields of the Saar but also the critical Longwy-Briey iron-ore region. That area also contained the essential portion of rail communications that connected Metz with the German armies of the West. By selecting Lorraine and conducting a successful American offensive in that region, it would deprive the enemy of ore for manufacturing

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<sup>108</sup> Richard W. Stewart, ed., *American Military History: The United States Army in a Global Era, 1917-2003*, vol. II (Washington DC: Center of Military History, 2005), 10-11. With Major Harbord's assistance, General Pershing chose an additional thirty other officers of which included Major Fox Conner and Captain Hugh Drum.

<sup>109</sup> Pershing, *My Experiences in the First World War*, vol.1, 85.

<sup>110</sup> JP 3-0, Appendix A-1.

munitions, endanger coal supplies in the Saar basin, and would cut off German lines of communication between the east and west.<sup>111</sup> The potential objectives that Lorraine provided could be linked in time and space to achieve in whole or in part the strategic objective of German defeat.

After considering Lorraine, General Pershing and his staff examined the issue of logistics and how the AEF would administrate it. Administration of logistics facilitated troop movement, transportation, and supply. Initially, ports and railroads were their primary concern. The AEF headquarter staff determined that the French ports of Brest, St. Nazaire, and Bordeaux would serve the AEF in the best capacity followed by Le Havre, La Pallice, and Marseille. These ports avoided the northern channel ports, which by 1917 were overburdened by British and French shipping. The ports also had access to interior French railway networks, which were in overall better condition as they had suffered less damaged from the war, and were not being used by the other allied forces.<sup>112</sup> Finally, the local areas surrounding these ports were less burdened, which facilitated the procurement of local supply, which was essential to supplement American supply as the networks developed.<sup>113</sup>

With the identification of functioning ports, General Pershing directed the establishment of a supply organization which would provide logistical support to the forward divisions. At its creation the organization was called the Line of Communication but was later renamed the Services of Supply (S.O.S). The supply system consisted of several bases, the first located around the selected French ports. The second called intermediate bases identified for storage and the classification of supplies. Finally, the third called advanced bases served as distribution locations for the division operating in the AEF area of operations. The advanced bases and depots transported supplies onto trains that moved them forward to division railheads and then the divisions pushed the

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<sup>111</sup> Pershing, *My Experiences in the First World War*, vol.1, 83-84.

<sup>112</sup> Ibid.

<sup>113</sup> Stewart, *American Military History*, 12.

supplies to the front in wagons and trucks.<sup>114</sup> The S.O.S basing operations were vitally important to the overall AEF purpose of providing an independent American force responsible for its own sector, capable of defending the front, and conducting offensive operations in support of the overall allied objectives. Without an efficient logistical network of bases, the United States would fail to achieve their purpose.<sup>115</sup>

General Pershing conducted operational art as the AEF commander during World War I because he used a cognitive approach supported by his skill, knowledge, experience, creativity, and judgment to develop strategies, campaigns, and operations to organize and employ military forces by integrating ends, ways, and means.<sup>116</sup> He demonstrated this by creating a strategic plan for AEF forces mobilization, logistics, and training. General Pershing also pursued strategic objectives, in whole or part, through the arrangement of tactical actions in time, space, and purpose.

Specifically General Pershing demonstrated operational art by linking the St. Mihiel reduction with the Meuse-Argonne offensive both of which were tied to the strategic purpose. He balanced risk and opportunity to create and maintain the conditions necessary to seize, retain, and exploit the initiative and gain a position of relative advantage. General Pershing's military risk was identified as conducting both the reduction of St. Mihiel and the Meuse-Argonne offensive in a limited period with inexperienced troops, while lacking organic artillery capabilities. However General Pershing balanced the identified risk in order to create an opportunity for the AEF and the allied forces in general. By linking St. Mihiel and Meuse-Argonne, General Pershing set conditions for future offensive operations within Germany and stimulatingly maintained an independent American fighting force. General Pershing continuously understood the operational environment

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<sup>114</sup> Stewart, *American Military History*, 24.

<sup>115</sup> Ibid. and Lacey, *Pershing*, 120-121. General Pershing's requirement for an effective system resulted in the replacement of several commanding officers. However, Major General Francis Kernan finally commanded the S.O.S and then later by Major General James Harbord, General Pershing's former Chief of Staff.

<sup>116</sup> ADRP 3-0, 2-1 and JP 3-0, II-13.

and the operational and strategic objectives. He used his skill and judgment of the AEF capabilities, but did not limit his execution based on preconceived notions of solutions such as conducting two major offensives concurrently.<sup>117</sup>

General Pershing applied operational art by creating a shared understanding of purpose. It began with his open and continuous collaboration and dialogue between his staff and his division commanders. His collaboration and dialogue enabled his commanders and his staff to share an understanding of the problems facing the AEF and the conditions of the operational environment. His effective collaboration facilitated assessment, fostered critical analysis, which in turn anticipated opportunities and risk throughout the entirety of the AEF's involvement in Europe.<sup>118</sup>

### Principles of Joint Operations

President Wilson's stance and direction regarding amalgamation provided General Pershing with the authoritative backing to achieve and maintain a unity of command, which is one of the nine principles of joint operations.<sup>119</sup> The purpose of unity of command is to ensure unity of effort under one responsible commander for every objective. The commander, in this case, General Pershing had the requisite authority to direct all forces employed in pursuit of a common purpose. Without that authority or by allowing amalgamation General Pershing's forces would likely not have been under one commander, causing confusion of purpose and daily operational actions mainly caused by language difficulties. Further, it was not clear to General Pershing or the United States' command authorities whether the allied forces would have valued the lives of American

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<sup>117</sup> Army Doctrine Publication (ADP) 3-0, *Operations* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2016), 22.

<sup>118</sup> ADRP 3-0, *Operations*, 2-4.

<sup>119</sup> JP 3-0, *Joint Operations*, Appendix A. Provides a description of the nine principles of joint operations which consists of objective, offensive, mass, maneuver, economy of force, unity of command, security, surprise, simplicity, restraint, perseverance and restraint.

soldiers as much as they did their own.<sup>120</sup> In the end, General Pershing had the support of the President and Secretary Baker to maintain a unity of command. They had selected a commander in whom they had confidence, given him the power and responsibility, and they worked to provide him with everything he needed and supported him in every decision he made.<sup>121</sup>

Other than the administration of logistics primarily through basing, General Pershing recognized that his next important consideration was the preparation or training of his forces, to ensure their efficient service in the war.<sup>122</sup> As such the divisions received additional basic soldiering skills, as well training on the British method of trench warfare, such as how to use gas, grenades, mortars, the bayonet, and demolition operations.<sup>123</sup> However, General Pershing insisted that AEF receives additional offensive tactics training despite the fact that the Allied forces on the western front were locked in trench warfare. It was his opinion that “victory could not be won by the costly process of attrition, but it must be won by driving the enemy out into the open and engaging him in a war of movement.”<sup>124</sup> General Pershing provided the AEF with an instruction that stressed open warfare methods and offensive action. Additionally, he emphasized the importance of marksmanship and the insistence upon rifle proficiency.<sup>125</sup> Open warfare and marksmanship training proved to be another source of disagreement between General Pershing and the other allied commanders. The British and French commanders wanted the AEF on the frontline as soon as possible, likely believing that the operational environment of trench warfare and attrition would go

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<sup>120</sup> Pershing, *My Experiences in the First World War*, vol.1, 32 and Lacey, *Pershing*, 131. When the United States entered the war, the British immediately asked for 500,000 troops to augment their forces. However, at the same time, Britain Prime Minister Lloyd George was deliberately keeping men in England instead of sending them abroad so that General Haig could not waste what remained of British manpower.

<sup>121</sup> Donald Smythe, *Pershing, General of the Armies* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1986), 6.

<sup>122</sup> Pershing, *My Experiences in the First World War*, vol.1, 150.

<sup>123</sup> Ibid., vol.1, 151.

<sup>124</sup> Ibid., vol.1, 152.

<sup>125</sup> Ibid., vol. 1, 153.

unchanged for the remainder of the war. However, General Pershing remained committed to the offensive principle of joint operations, as he had learned them. To seize, retain, and exploit the initiative the AEF would need to conduct and more importantly be prepared for offensive actions.<sup>126</sup> Offensive action, maintaining freedom of action, and achieving decisive results was tied to the AEF's purpose and everything that General Pershing worked for, including logistics, training, and the selection of their area of operations.

General Pershing applied the principles of joint operation during the St. Mihiel and Meuse-Argonne Offensives. While it was the first independent American planned and conducted offense it was also a joint, well-coordinated combined arms attack that met the defending German forces and ultimately overwhelmed them. General Pershing successfully massed his forces, which is concentrating the effects of combat, power at the most advantageous place and time to produce decisive results. To achieve mass, appropriate joint force capabilities are integrated and synchronized where they will have a decisive effect in a short period of time. By massing the effects of combat power, rather than just concentrating forces, the AEF were able to produce decisive results and minimize human losses and waste of resources.<sup>127</sup> At St. Mihiel General Pershing had effectively used a combination of overwhelming artillery, infantry, and tanks as mutually supporting teams. Further supported by a combination of French and AEF aircraft, which conducted artillery observation, protection of infantry against enemy aircraft fire, interdiction and long range bombing.<sup>128</sup>

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<sup>126</sup> JP 3-0, A-1.

<sup>127</sup> JP 3-0, A-2.

<sup>128</sup> Dupuy and Dupuy, *The Harper Encyclopedia of Military History*, 1075. At St. Mihiel the Germans in lost over 10,000 men, 450 guns, and sustained 16,000 prisoners of war to the Americans. The AEF suffered around 7,000 casualties.



## Conclusion

General Pershing as the AEF commander had a high level of responsibility and was ultimately successful in integrating an independent and competent fighting American force into the battlefields of Europe. He did this primarily through extensive offensive training, the administration of logistics, and enabling strong and capable subordinate commanders. General Pershing's success came from a direct result of his experiences as an observer in Manchuria during the Russo-Japanese War and as the commander of the Punitive Expedition into Mexico in pursuit of Pancho Villa. It was from those two experiences that General Pershing honed his intellectual tools specifically his ability to understand, visualize and describe his approach for conducting operations. His experiences in the Pacific and Mexico enabled him to integrate and synchronize the elements of combat power and convey his intent and guidance. General Pershing's experience before World War I significantly impacted his skill, knowledge, and judgment as a commander. It assisted him in overcoming the ambiguity and intricacies of the complex and uncertain operational environment of World War I. Specifically General Pershing observed and demonstrated a combination of the elements of operational art as well as the principles of joint operations. He was later able to incorporate them into his deployment, training, sustainment and execution of combat missions in Europe from 1917 to 1918.

General Pershing's activities as an observer and attaché to Japan in Manchuria exposed him to the fundamental elements of modern warfare. That experience provided General Pershing with a foundation for understanding and visualizing warfare and ultimately helped him describe an approach for conducting modern warfare. Specifically conducting war with regards to the requirements of large-scale mobilization and the administration of logistics through basing operations. The Japanese basing operations at Dairen enabled operational reach which allowed their armies to maintain tempo against the Russians far north to Mukden, and ultimately led to their operational and strategic success. During the Punitive Expedition, administration of logistics or the

lack there of significantly impacted General Pershing's basing operations and operational reach, which in turn effected his tempo, or the relative speed and rhythm of military operations over time. All together resulting in significant risk to accomplishing the end-state the capture of Pancho Villa.

As AEF commander during World War I, when deciding on Lorraine as the location for the American area of operation he first considered the administration of logistics, specifically basing operations. The French ports of Brest, St. Nazaire, Bordeaux, Le Havre, La Pallice, and Marseille were selected because they provided easy access to strategic sealift and had adequate space for storage. Further their locations facilitated the transshipment of supplies and equipment, and had accessibility to multiple interior lines of communications through France to the forward lines of troops. General Pershing's selection of Lorraine also facilitated training areas, which were suitable for the development and employment of a large, independent force. Finally, Lorraine provided opportunities for an American offensive with decisive military objectives consisting of ore for manufacturing munitions; coal supplies in the Saar basin, and could potentially cut off German lines of communication between the east and west.

General Pershing observed in Manchuria and experienced in Mexico that the scale of modern warfare significantly impacted the ability of the commander to command and control his men in the field. It is a lesson that taught him that leaders had to be creative and redundant in their use of technology. It also required the implementation of mission orders to enable effective control of large forces displaced over vast areas of terrain. During the Punitive Expedition, General Pershing incorporated technology such as the aeroplanes and telegraph as well as mission orders to command and control his subordinate leaders and it was a technique that he used again during World War I.

General Pershing observed in Manchuria and experienced in Mexico that future wars would be characterized by long duration, requiring combatants to be extremely disciplined and physically able to endure sustained battles and campaigns. He had observed Japanese perseverance achieve

their strategic end-state despite their devastating loss of human lives and significant expenditure of resources against the Russians. General Pershing recognized that they had done that through discipline and physical stamina. In Mexico, General Pershing's men were spread out over hundreds of miles, pursuing an ever-moving objective. The conditions while not as lethal still tested the endurance of his force, which solidified in his mind, that training, basic soldier skills like marksmanship proficiency and discipline were absolutely essential for success in modern warfare.

General Pershing applied this logic when he directed that all AEF divisions arriving in France to split off and attend specialized training at Gondrecourt and Neufchâteau and Valdohon. General Pershing also insisted that AEF receives additional offensive tactics training despite the fact that the Allied forces on the western front were locked in trench warfare. General Pershing went so far as to provide the AEF with an instruction that stressed open warfare methods and offensive action.

Manchuria and Mexico demonstrated that the principles of war or the principles of joint operations had not changed despite the technological advances and long duration of modern warfare. General Pershing recognized that Commanders must have clear objectives when planning and executing campaigns. That they must always strive to seize, retain, and exploit the initiative through the offense. The Japanese had demonstrated that they could successfully maneuver their forces to place the Russians in a position of disadvantage but were not always successful in the flexible application and concentration of combat power. This lesson cost the Japanese thousands of lives, and if the Russo-Japanese war had continued much longer, they would have certainly reached culmination. Culmination would have allowed the Russians to reconsolidate resulting in Japanese strategic defeat as they had reached the end of their forces strength and national ability to sustain war resources requirements. As commander of the Punitive Expedition, General Pershing found that it was increasingly difficult to obtain clear objectives, maintain the offensive, and concentrate

the effects of his combat power at the most helpful place and time to produce decisive results. He took those observations and experiences and applied them as AEF commander.

During World War I, General Pershing was able to achieve the offensive, through maneuver and mass toward achievable objectives that were decisive. General Pershing insisted that each campaign be independent American endeavor executed toward decisive objectives and that they had as much combat power massed to support the operation. That is why the reduction of the St. Mihiel salient was remarkably successful; the AEF had effectively utilized a combination of overwhelming artillery, infantry, and tanks as mutually supporting teams, supported by a combination of French and AEF aircraft.

Finally General Pershing's experience during the Punitive Expedition served to build the foundational relationship and trust between General Pershing and the United States command authority. He was provided with specific guidance regarding the conditions for conducting and terminating the expedition, and General Pershing was entrusted with the ultimate authority to meet those conditions. That relationship of trust and authority carried over to General Pershing's command of the AEF ultimately allowing him unity of command; the ability to direct all forces employed in pursuit of a common purpose. General Pershing successfully resisted amalgamation and was able to employ his forces independently in order achieve an American strategic end-state, that being to build and maintain national honor, preserve the visibility of the American contribution to the war and participate in after war peace negotiations to ensure the future of democracy in Europe.

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